



Good to Know

Equipment and Safety

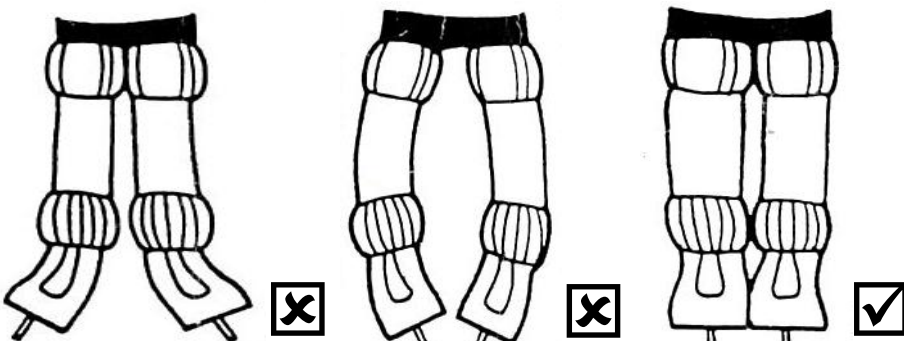


Most department and sports stores sell skating equipment in a variety of prices and quality ranges. Before buying skates, check carefully for:

- Proper fit
- Firm ankle support
- Good quality leather
- Correct blade placement

How Skates Fit

- Wear only one pair of tight fitting socks or tights (the same pair that will be worn when skating)
 - 1) Partially lace boots through instep
 - 2) Slide foot forward so toes touch the front but are not cramped
 - 3) Stand with weight equally distributed over both feet
 - 4) Bend knees
 - 5) The space at the back of the heel should be no more than a pencil's width
- Tie laces loosely over the toe and front of the foot and snugly over the ankle and instep
- Skates should fit snugly around the ankle and heel with some room for movement of the toes
- There should be no looseness or creases in the boot
- The tongues should be well padded and wide enough to cover the front of the ankle and stay in place
- Walk around in the skates off the ice – they should feel comfortable



Clothing

- Clothing should provide warmth, allow for movement and provide some protection from falls
- Ski suits are generally warm and dry but may restrict movement
- Layering of sweat suits, sweaters, ski jackets and long underwear or leotards is recommended
- Warm mittens or gloves are a **must**



Skate Care

- Always wear protective guards when not on the ice
- Dry blades and sole plate completely with a cloth after use
- Always remove guards before storing skates
- Unlace skates sufficiently before removing them so that the back of the boot will not break down or rip
- Air out boots after use

Shopping for Skates

- Avoid buying a larger size skate in anticipation that the skater will “grow into it”. Poor fitting equipment will cause discomfort, discouragement and poor results
- Moulded plastic skates should be avoided. They are inflexible and make it difficult for skaters to bend their knees and push off the ice. Plastic becomes very cold and stiff on the ice, which makes the skaters feet cold as a result
- Look for blades that are screwed onto the boot rather than attached with rivets so that the blade can be moved, if necessary. If the blade is riveted, make sure it’s on straight and centered for the skater’s body. The blade should feel centered under the foot and the foot should not fall to one side
- A leather boot is preferred over vinyl
- Make sure the boot doesn’t have any wrinkles

Sharpening Skates

- Sharpen skates as soon as they are purchased
- Use a good skate sharpening company
- Re-sharpen skates after approximately 30 hours of skating (depending on usage and care)
- The bottom toe pick should not be removed when sharpening figure skates. The pick is part of the design of figure skates and is essential to proper balance

Safety

Preventing an injury is better than dealing with one. Skate Canada clubs and coaches plan sessions with “safety first” in mind. Here are basic safety rules that skaters should follow on every Skate Canada skating session:

- Check equipment regularly to see that it is appropriate, fits and is in good shape
- Do warm ups and cool downs which include stroking and slow stretching. Some of these exercises may be done off the ice
- Any skater with a previous injury must be 100% recovered before returning to the activity
- Get up quickly after falling down
- Look in the direction of travel when skating backwards
- No pushing, playing tag or bumping into others or the boards
- No gum or candy on the ice
- Sharp objects should not be carried in pockets
- Starts and stops should be done a safe distance from the boards
- Laces should be tucked into the top of the boot. The laces should never be wrapped around the top of the boot as it is a safety hazard and circulation to the foot may be cut off
- Coaches should be advised of any skaters with special medical conditions

** We suggest that you talk to your coach about purchasing and maintaining your equipment*



Helmets



- * Helmets are **mandatory** for skaters working on stages one through five
- * The helmet should be snug
- * Both the strap and the helmet should be adjustable
- * Look for helmets made of hard plastic with a thick sponge layer
- * Look for helmets approved by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) as they provide the best quality and safest design

* A hockey helmet is mandatory as it is designed to withstand repeated bumps and protect against penetration